

Studies in Christianity

Christian Love #7

S#1.

Love For The Lost

S#2.

Text : **Luke 15: 1-24**

A. We are in series of survey type studies on the subject of Christian love.

S#3.

1. We started observing the importance of loving God.

S#4.

a. We saw that, in His very essence God IS love.

- 1) We defined love
- 2) We observed that Jesus personified love.
- 3) We saw that God's love for mankind is unconditional.

b. Learning how to love God.

Deut. 13: 4 – You shall follow the Lord your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him

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|---------------|------------------|
| 1) Follow Him | 4) Listen to Him |
| 2) Fear Him | 5) Serve Him |
| 3) Obey Him | 6) Cling to Him |

c. Loving God By Sharing Him.

- 1) Jesus demand love beyond what is common.
- 2) An all-consuming love cannot be hidden.
- 3) Challenged – when have you actually shared the gospel ?

d. We first asked, “How Do I Know I Love God.”

- 1) I have the courage to face whatever comes and confidence in judgment.
- 2) Loving God separates me from the world. *“Can't feel at home in this world anymore”*
- 3) Love causes one to desire to obey God. **I don't feel restricted by His commands.**

2. We then shifted our emphasis to the 2nd loving our neighbor as our self.

S#5.

a. Loving my neighbor is a debt I can never pay off,

- 1) Can't love our neighbor if we don't love our self.
- 2) Must not be too much in love with self .. narcissist
- 3) The best way to be loved is to love others first.

b. We can't pay off the debt, but we keep paying interest on it.

- 1) We are God's ambassador to our neighbor and our neighborhood.
- 2) We must be of the character that would wash our neighbor's feet.
- 3) We must be ready to meet our neighbor's needs. (Love is proactive.)

- 4) We are comforters to the brokenhearted.
- 5) People come to us because we are known to be compassionate to all.

B. Today we look toward God's love for lost people and our duty to them. S#6.

1. **Luke 15** is a set of 3 parables in a progression of parables taught in villages.
 - a. During part of the Lord's ministry He used parables to teach and to hide.

Luke 8: 9 – His disciples began questioning Him as to what this parable meant.¹⁰ And He said, " To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is in parables, so that "seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand." S#7.
 - b. Parables use a story about common things to illustrate a spiritual truth.
 - c. Each parable has only ONE principle message. (to make too much misses point)
2. These three parables address a different theme than the preceding series of parables.
 - a. Parable of the guests who sought honor – Don't use the kingdom to gain prestige.
 - b. Parable of the guests did not come – God will punish rejection.
 - c. Parable of the builder who could not complete his tower.
 - d. Parable of the king who could not stand against a superior force.

* All of these referred to man's response to God.

I. Some general thoughts about the parables of Luke 24. c S#8.

- A. These parables are consistent with the theme of the book of Luke. (the bible)
 1. Theme verse : S#9.

Luke 19:10 – For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.
 2. The theme verse in the Gospel of Mark is similar.

Mark 10:45 – ... whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all.
⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.
- B. All three parables are of something that was owned, but lost, then recovered.
 1. That which was lost did not lose value because it was lost ... sought after.
 2. The owner never gave up until they were recovered.
- C. The parables illustrate three ways people can be lost.
 1. Wander off (Slowly drift away)
 2. Suddenly separated
 3. Become rebellious

D. After each lost thing was found there was rejoicing.

1. The first was only 1% of the whole, the second was 10%, the third was 50%
2. The inherent value of the lost did not affect the feeling of joy when recovered.

E. The premise is the same in all three parables, the lost is returned.**S#10.**

1. Jesus (God the Son) was pictured in three ways :
 - a. Shepherd
 - b. A woman
 - c. A father
2. Man is pictured as that which is lost :
 - a. Sheep
 - b. Coin
 - c. Son
3. The owner never gives up on the lost.

II. Let us consider the parable of the lost sheep.**S#11.****A. The herd consisted of 100 sheep, but the shepherd never stopped seeking the one.**

1. Do not forget; these parable were told in response to the Pharisees.
Luke 15: 1 – Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him **S#12.**
 to listen to Him. **2** Both the Pharisees and the scribes began to
 grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."
2. Jesus was indeed having interaction with sinners, but not fellowship.
3. The parables were to teach them WHY He was interacting with sinners, **to save**.
4. We are also left to interact with sinners, but not to fellowship with them.
John 17:14 – I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, **S#13.**
 because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. **15** I do
 not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil
 one. **16** They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world **17** sanctify

B. The shepherd left the 99 to look for the one. (*Any shepherd counts his sheep.*)

1. The shepherd risked losing many to save the one ... this illustrates the value of each.
2. If you were the only lost person on earth, Jesus would have died to save you.
3. At some time each one of us was this lost sheep,
Isa. 53: 6 – All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to **S#14.**
 his own way; But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.

C. All of Heaven is watching this drama unfold. (cf – Heb. 12: 1)

1. God knows the day you start wandering off, but He does not force you to stay.
 - a. There is no fence to keep you restrained.
 - b. Love is the only thing that binds one to God.
2. God loves you and He wants you to love Him, but He allows you to choose.
3. It breaks His heart when you leave, **but** all Heaven rejoice when you return.

Luke 15: 7 – I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven **S#15.**
 over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous
 persons who need no repentance.

D. Sheep wander off slowly and become lost.

1. Very bad vision so when they cannot see the herd they are lost.
2. They eat with their head down so they can wander off unawares. (*self-absorbed*)
3. It's not their intent to be lost, they get involved in eating and find themselves lost.
4. When people get their mind on satisfying their flesh, they wander w/o realizing it.

III. The lost coin is a different situation from the lost sheep.**S#16.****A. This parable was much more meaningful to a first century audience,****S#17.**

1. Women were given a few coins when they married.
2. Those coins were the only thing they owned and their husband could not take.
3. If they were widowed or divorced, those coins might be their only livelihood.
 - a. The woman most often kept them on her person ... worn as jewelry on head.
 - b. To lose one of them might cause panic or at least grave concern.

B. The coin was lost all of a sudden as a result of the actions of another.**S#18.**

1. The coins have no mind of their own; they are possessions.
2. Sometimes young people are turned off by self-righteous hypocrites. (cf- **Matt 18:6**)
3. I have known cases where babes in Christ were so offended by brethren they left.
4. Like physical children, spiritual infants starve when not properly nourished.

I Pet. 2: 2 – Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word,
 so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,

C. If not taught differently, we all live by the flesh.

1. This is natural because we all live in the flesh.
2. We once had basic moral standards taught in this country, but no more.

3. All who are not taught live like this and so did many of us.

Eph. 2: 1 – And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, **2** in which you **S#19.** formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. **3** Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

4. When caught with a prostitute on site, the Security guard said, “*Sex is like drinking water. When you’re thirsty you have to get a drink of water.*”

D. God is constantly seeking His lost coins and when he finds them He polishes them.

1. No matter how tarnished you were by sin, God will forgive you and make you shine.
2. **I Cor. 6: 9** – Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the **S#20.** kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, **10** nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. **11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

IV. The “prodigal son” openly rebelled against the father.

S#21.

A. The prodigal son made an active decision to leave.

S#22.

1. He did not want to be under the authority of his father.
2. He wanted to receive without working for it. (*The father had worked for it.*)
3. He did not appreciate what he had until it was gone.

B. The Father’s response was patient and loving.

1. The Father did not want the son to go, **but** He did not force him to stay.
2. The Father did not go after the son, **but** welcomed him home.

B. Those who rebel are difficult to restore.

1. **Heb. 6: 4** – For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and **S#23.** have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, **5** and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, **6** and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.
2. The rebellious heart has decided to reject Jesus and His atonement. (*live for the day*)
3. Citing this passage, an elder refused to go with me to visit one who had rebelled.

D. Though the Father did not go after the son, he longed for his return,

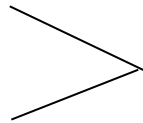
1. He saw him coming a long way off.
2. He welcomed him with new robe, sandals, and a ring. (*All trappings of sonship*)
3. He threw a party to celebrate.

CONCLUSION :

S#24.

A. We have seen three parables which define the proper attitude toward the lost.

1. We're expected to interact with them, but are forbidden to have fellowship with them
2. No matter how they became lost we have a responsibility to seek after them.
 - a. Wander off
 - b. Driven off
 - c. Rebel and depart



As ambassadors we urge reconciliation 2 Cor 5:20

B. The Lord wants the lost to be sought until they are found.

S#25.

1. Great effort was expended to find the lost sheep and lost coin.
2. The Father is eager for the return of the rebellious.

C. Are we satisfied with our efforts to seek and bring back the lost ?

S#26.

INVITATION :**A. Each of us is a missionary or a mission field. Which are you ?**

S#27.

B. If you are lost, Jesus is seeking you and eager to save you.

S#28. ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**Luke 15: 1-24**

1 Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. **2** Both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

3 So He told them this parable, saying, **4** "What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? **5** "When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. **6** "And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' **7** "I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

8 Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? **9** "When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost!' **10** "In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

11 And He said, "A man had two sons. **12** "The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' So he divided his wealth between them. **13** "And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living. **14** "Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be impoverished. **15** "So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. **16** "And he would have gladly filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him. **17** "But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! **18** 'I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; **19** I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.'" **20** "So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. **21** "And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' **22** "But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; **23** and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; **24** for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.' And they began to celebrate.